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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine the challenges and sources of support of new community college instructors during the first year of hire. Specifically, the study examined the problems new faculty encountered with regard to students, teaching load, collegial relationships, administration or college governance, and faculty organizations; the effect of institutional size and previous teaching experience on the problems encountered; and the things which new faculty found helpful during the first year of hire. Study participants were 19 full-time, tenure-track, teaching faculty hired in fall 1989 at one of three community colleges in California: an urban-centered college in a multi-college district employing 150 full-time faculty; and 2 suburban, single-college districts, employing 260 and 100 full-time faculty respectively. Data were gathered in face-to-face interviews, using an open-ended interview questionnaire. Study findings indicated that instructors with no previous community college teaching experience were more likely to report problems with student diversity in the classroom, the number of teaching hours, and feelings of emotional isolation with regard to colleagues, while the size of the institution also affected these same problems. Also, while the amount of experience did not affect the types of problems reported, the type of experience was important. The following recommendations emerged from the study: (1) allow new faculty to evaluate the orientation program; (2) reduce orientation information into modules of three or fewer hours; (3) give new faculty a tour of the college and surrounding community; (4) provide released time for assigned mentors and their proteges; and (5) use tenured faculty as mentors. A review of teacher orientation and mentoring efforts at the elementary, secondary, two-year college, and four-year college levels; a 64-item bibliography; data tables; and the survey instrument are included. (PAA)